CLAIMS

1. A system for enabling the tactile properties of an article – for example an article of clothing – to be assessed, comprising a display unit combining means for displaying a first image of the article, with means for triggering, and displaying electronically, at least one further image, which is visually representative of a particular tactile property of said article such as softness, density, thermal property, thickness, hairiness, prickliness, drape, deformability, elasticity, crispness and smoothness.

2. A system according to claim 1, wherein said further image includes an indication of the scale to which the article possesses the said property sufficient to enable the article to be compared with other articles possessing the same property.

3. A system according to claim 1, wherein the further image is a close-up view of the article and the system comprises means for triggering an animation of a region of said article giving the impression to the viewer that the article is touched at said region and pressed inwardly and means for varying the extent to which said region appears to be pressed inwardly dependent on the actual density of said article.

4. A system according to claim 1, wherein the further image shows the contour of the article and the photography settings are arranged to highlight the contour, whereby when the article is of actual high softness the width of the highlighted contour is greater than when said article is of actual low softness.

5. A system according to claim 1, wherein the further image comprises an animation with an object whose density of colour pixels gradually radially decreases and means are provided to vary the rate at which the density of colour pixels decrease dependent on the actual softness of said article.

6. A system according to claim 1, wherein the further image comprises an animation with an object whose density of colour pixels gradually radially decrease and which is set to

displace following a path of varying length dependent on the actual softness of said article.

7. A system according to claim 1, wherein the further image comprises an animation with an object whose density of colour pixels gradually radially decrease and which is set to displace at a velocity dependent on the actual softness of said article.

8. A system according to claim 1, wherein means are provided to trigger an animation displaying a number of filaments which bend to varying degrees dependent on the actual hairiness of said article.

9. A system according to claim 8, comprising means which respond to the position of a cursor over the image to trigger varying degrees of bending of said filaments.

10. A system according to claim 1, wherein means are provided to trigger an animation displaying a number of filaments which buckle to varying degrees dependent on the actual prickliness of said article.

11. A system according to claim 10, comprising means which respond to the position of a cursor over the image to trigger varying degrees of buckling of said filaments.

12. A system according to claim 1, wherein the further image containing an array of objects whose colour contrasts with the colour of said article which are visible at different frequencies and the array is of varying density dependent on the actual extent of prickliness of said article.

13. A system according to claim 1, wherein the further image is of an article draped over an object and associated with an animation of a wave form of varying frequencies dependent on the actual drape properties of said article.

14. A system according to claim 1, wherein a sequence of further images show an article of clothing at various stages of folding, whereby the viewer is able to assess the thickness of the article.

15. A system according to claim 1, wherein a sequence of further images are stored which show the article under different levels of stretching, whereby the viewer is able to assess the extent to which the article may be stretched.

16. A system according to claim 1, wherein the further image is a line which extends to a greater or lesser extent dependent on the article's actual elasticity.

17. A system according to claim 1, wherein there are provided at least two further images, where the first image is a common geometric shape such as a square and the second is an image of the shape as if having been submitted to a deforming system of forces, whereby the extent of deformation shown varies dependent on the article's deformability.

18. A system according to claim 1, wherein there is provided a thermometer image with a mercury line rising to varying degrees dependent on the article's thermal properties.

19. A system according to claim 1, wherein there is provided a view of the article and an object which displaces along a line at varying degrees of velocities dependent on the actual smoothness of the article.

20. A system according to claim 17, wherein the article in said view comprises a fold line along which the object displaces.

21. A system according to claim 1, wherein the further image is coupled with a sound track representative of one of the article's tactile properties.